

## **Town of Wellesley**

### **Playing Fields Policy**

**Purpose:** This policy is intended to be the framework for managing the priority and usage of active playing fields in the Town of Wellesley. This policy has been approved by the Board of Selectmen, Board of Public Works, Natural Resources Commission, School Committee, and the Recreation Commission. The policy is administered by the Recreation Department.

**History:** In 1997, the Natural Resources Commission established the Playing Fields Task Force (PFTF). The PFTF consisted of representatives of the major use groups (schools, Little League/Softball, Youth Soccer and Youth Lacrosse), the Recreation Commission, the Natural Resources Commission, and the Board of Public Works. The purpose of this task force was to identify strategies for field maintenance (including methods for funding) and to work together to identify ways to meet field use demands while recognizing scarce resources. The PFTF has continued to meet monthly and other interested users, such as representatives from the adult leagues, have become members. In 2004, the Recreation Commission took over sponsorship of the PFTF. Voting privileges are limited to the elected officials from the five boards (Selectmen, Public Works, Natural Resources, Schools and Recreation) and one representative each from Little League, Youth Soccer, Youth Lacrosse and the adult leagues.

**Use of Playing Fields:**

Jurisdictional boards (NRC, Schools, Selectmen) will be given field status updates by DPW and will be consulted in order to ensure that fields under their control are not adversely impacted by overuse. If any board determines that an overuse condition exists, that board will reserve the right to restrict issuance of permits.

**Permits:** Use of fields requires a permit, which is issued by the Recreation Department. Use of passive land and town-wide special events require a permit from NRC.

Requests for permits by the youth leagues will be done on a seasonal basis and requests must be made by the following dates:

April 1 – Spring  
June 1 – Summer  
August 1 – Fall

It is expected that the representatives from each league will meet to work out field use prior to submitting permit requests to the Recreation Director. The Youth Leagues (Soccer, Little League, Lacrosse) will work together to submit one master schedule to Recreation. In the event that disputes cannot be resolved, the Recreation Director will be responsible for making a final decision. Permits are issued to the youth leagues for both practice times and game times. However, coaches will not be assigned to specific practice times. Use of the fields during practice time is on a first come, first served basis.

### **User Groups / Priority Usage:**

Permits are issued based on the following priorities:

- 1) Park Management Systems: Division of Park & Tree (DPW) professionals, with input from the PFTF, will determine appropriate field maintenance schedules. Additionally, they will determine when fields may be opened following adverse weather. The DPW will also recommend when fields will be closed in order to rest them. Whenever possible, DPW will email user groups and post signs if fields are closed. Users are expected to stay off fields during wet field conditions and to adhere to these guidelines. Users must show good judgment when using fields and must stop play if the field shows damage during activity. Any group who causes damage to any field will be responsible for repair costs.
- 2) Town-Wide Special Events: This includes events such as town days, memorial services, and fairs. NRC will issue permits for these events. NRC will inform Recreation if these events are to impact on previously scheduled athletic events.
- 3) School Use: Wellesley schools have the next priority use of fields over any other group including youth sports. Wellesley school use includes athletic games, practices and other special events.

Coaches Clinics: Wellesley School Department coaches who wish to run clinics must present a letter of support from the Athletic Director to the Recreation Director. Spring vacation clinics must be booked by March 1. Coaches understand that spring clinics may be cancelled due to field conditions. Summer clinics must be booked by June 1. A fee will be charged.

- 4) Wellesley Resident Youth Sports: Wellesley Youth Sports (Soccer, Little League, Girl's Softball and Lacrosse) will be allotted hours based on season and membership. It is expected that these groups will work together to generate equitable field use. Wellesley Youth Sports

may also run in-house clinics for their members. Clinic times are limited to the days and times listed on their permit or a new permit must be issued.

- 5) Wellesley Recreation Department Programs: Use of fields for camps, clinics and programs, which are run by the Recreation Department, will not preempt youth sports. When these programs are run during youth sport seasons, all attempts will be made to limit them to using Warren play area. Recreation may use other fields during the summer, as long as the fields are not adversely impacted by overuse. The Recreation Department offers these programs in support of its general mission to provide affordable recreational activities.
- 6) Wellesley Adult Groups: Adult groups must be organized with the primary intention of supporting Town residents. Leagues may play teams from other Towns, but one Wellesley team must be involved in the match. Leagues must give priority to Town residents when filling team rosters. Wellesley teams must be able to prove that 75% of the membership are Wellesley residents or are Town of Wellesley employees. Team rosters must be turned in to the Recreation Director prior to the start of the season.
- 7) Wellesley Resident – One time use: The Town recognizes that residents will want to use fields for one time uses such as birthday parties or neighborhood softball games. Permits are not issued for children's birthday parties. A permit and a fee is required for an adult event.
- 8) Charitable Groups: If field space is available, as determined by the Recreation Department Director, groups who are hosting an event to raise money for charity will be given field use without incurring costs.
- 9) Non-Resident Groups / Non Recreation Department Camps and Clinics: A non-resident group is defined as one whose membership is less than 75% Wellesley residents or Town of Wellesley employees. Use by non-residents will be limited to baseball, softball, soccer and lacrosse. Use of fields by other sports/groups is dependent on field conditions and availability. The Recreation Department may arrange for field use by outside camps during the summer months.

#### **Fees:**

Field use fees are collected by the Recreation Department and are then segregated into an account to be used by DPW for field maintenance. Money may be expended by Board of Public Works after consultation with the Recreation Commission and NRC. Quarterly reports will be given to the Boards and PFTF.

- 1) Town Wide Special Events – no fee

- 2) School Use – no fee / Coaches Clinics \$15 per participant
- 3) Resident Youth Sports - \$15 per member per season per sport
- 4) Wellesley Recreation Department Programs – no fee
- 5) Wellesley Adult Groups - \$25 per member - \$40 per member when using lights (\$15 to field account and \$25 to light account)
- 6) Wellesley Resident – one time use \$50 per game
- 7) Charitable Groups – no fee
- 8) Non resident adult groups - \$150 per game
- 9) Non-Recreation Department Camps - \$20 per participant

### **General Field Use Rules**

Hours of Operation: Fields may be used until dusk with the exception of the lighted Multipurpose Field at Hunnewell. Lights may remain on until 9:30 pm. No play before 9 am on Sunday at any field that abuts homeowners.

Prohibited Activities: Consumption/possession of alcoholic beverages; use of fields beyond permitted dates or times; use of fields during inclement weather or before they are declared ready; and any activity that may cause field damage.

Care and Maintenance of Fields: Groups are expected to use trash receptacles and to police themselves following an event. If the group expects to generate excess trash, they must provide a means for removing trash themselves. The Town of Wellesley encourages groups to provide their own receptacles for recyclable materials such as water bottles and to carry out such items from the field.

Baseball/Softball players and coaches are expected to groom the infields after each game and practice. Equipment for grooming is supplied and coaches are responsible for knowing the storage box combinations.

Groups will not use any field posted as closed. Groups will not use fields when surface conditions are wet. Groups are expected to use good judgment regarding potential field damage should the weather deteriorate prior to or during play.